



“Great Apartments Start Here!”

Janet Gagnon
Manager, Government Affairs
janet@aagla.org
213.384.4131; Ext. 307

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Via Electronic Mail

Members of the Community Services, Public Safety, Housing and Development Committee
City of Oxnard
300 West Third Street
Oxnard, California 93030

Re: A Review of Rent Control and Tenant Protection Strategies (Agenda Item D4)

Dear Members of the Community Services, Public Safety, Housing and Development Committee;

At the September 14th Community Services, Public Safety, Housing and Development Committee (“Committee”) meeting, the Committee will discuss a recommendation for a study session on rent control and tenant protection strategies. The Apartment Association of Greater Los Angeles’ (AAGLA or Association) strongly opposes rent control and urges the Committee to work with AAGLA and other key stakeholders to develop and implement alternative strategies that are significantly more successful at encouraging affordable housing development and that are far more economical for the City and its residents to implement.

AAGLA, established in 1917, is a non-profit association consisting of rental housing providers and residential property management professionals throughout the Southern California region. Today, our association has grown to assist more than 10,000 members, each of whom own or manage over 175,000 rental housing units throughout our territory in Ventura, Los Angeles, and San Bernardino counties.

AAGLA represents thousands of small business rental housing providers, inclusive of numerous smaller, “mom and pop” rental property owners within Oxnard. Many of our members are retired seniors that worked regular “9-to-5” jobs for decades, scrimping and saving to afford their small investment in rental property that secures and supplements their retirement income and at the same time provides affordable housing to the members of the Oxnard community. Our members chose to make these small community investments as their way to house themselves and others. Due to the existing statewide eviction moratorium, many of these housing providers have received little, if any, rent since March 2020 – 18 months. Many have already exhausted much or all of their retirement savings to fund ongoing building maintenance and operations costs, property taxes, insurance and mortgages. Some smaller rental housing providers are, today, already on the brink of bankruptcy and/or foreclosure that would result in Oxnard losing some of the most affordable housing currently available.

As Staff correctly states in their report, rent control has failed to provide affordable housing. Rent control measures never equate to affordability and implementation will not result in the construction of a single new rental housing unit. Rent control will decrease the quantity and quality of rental housing in the City and will only discourage



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development of the badly needed new supply of rental housing units. We strongly support and urge the Committee to focus on strategies that foster rather than hinder the availability of affordable housing and encourage further housing production. Staff have identified many areas for possible City action including building new affordable housing, increasing use of density bonuses, and enforcement of existing inclusionary housing requirements. These are areas worthy of a study session with key stakeholders in the housing development community.

Since January 1, 2020, renters in Oxnard and throughout California are covered by the provisions under The Tenant Protection Act of 2019 (Assembly Bill 1482), the statewide rent control and tenant protections law which limits annual rent increases, established "Just Cause" eviction requirements and requires relocation fees for no fault evictions. This State Law was the result of extensive negotiations and input from key stakeholders, including both housing providers and renter groups.

As correctly identified by Staff and referenced in CAUSE's own findings, the root problem for renters not exercising their rights is a lack of knowledge about Assembly Bill 1482, existing local health and safety codes, and federal fair housing laws. The solution is for the City to conduct a study on best practices for outreach and education for renters and rental housing providers on existing rights and responsibilities. This would be a cost-effective endeavor for the City as it could be conducted using existing resources such as the City's website, utility billing mailers, and webinars by community development staff.

Further, Assembly Bill 1482 only went into effect on January 1, 2020 and has not yet been fully implemented due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the emergency state law instituting a temporary moratorium on evictions, Assembly Bill 832. Once Assembly Bill 1482 is fully implemented, then renters, housing providers, the City of Oxnard and the state for the first time will be able to see its impacts on the rental housing industry. Until this law is fully implemented it is extremely premature to consider any modifications to it by local ordinance. In addition, any additional local edicts would only add further confusion to existing rights and responsibilities and create an additional layer of unnecessary and extremely expensive government bureaucracy.

If additional help is desired to be provided by the City to renters for emergency situations, then the creation of emergency rental vouchers for those that suddenly lose their jobs or become sick or injured should be considered. These vouchers can be targeted based on need to low-income renters. In addition, if there are concerns with individual situations between renters and rental housing providers, then the City could consider developing a voluntary renter/housing provider mediation program to help resolve issues on a case-specific basis.

AAGLA welcomes the opportunity to participate in further discussions with the City and other key stakeholders on these important issues. If you have any questions, please call me at (213) 384-4131; Ext. 307 or contact me via electronic mail at janet@aagla.org.

Very truly yours,

Janet M. Gagnon

Janet M. Gagnon, Esq.

CC: Daniel Yukelson, Executive Director, Apartment Association of Greater Los Angeles